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THE GREAT MAGYAR

From

"ALL THE YEAR ROUND"

A Weekly Journal
Conducted By

CHARLES DICKENS

Originally published in four parts, during April 1870.



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THE GREAT MAGYAR.

Chapter I

The rightful owner of this title is not Louis Kossuth, to whom it was assigned in 1849 by the enthusiasm of the English and American public. It is Count Stephen Széchenyi, whose imperishable claims to it are embodied in the enduring monuments of his beneficent genius, and on whom it has been deliberately conferred by the grateful admiration of his countrymen.

It happened to the writer of the following sketch to be present on the occasion when Louis Kossuth was introduced, as The Great Magyar, to the American Senate. The celebrated Daniel Webster, who, as secretary for the state department, then conducted the foreign affairs of the American Union, was subsequently invited to preside at a banquet given to Kossuth. He declined the invitation, on the ground that it would not become the representative of the foreign relations of the Union, to propose toasts in honour of a man charged with high treason against a sovereign with whose government the United States were on terms of peace and amity. Mr. Seward represented to Mr. Webster that his refusal to attend the Kossuth banquet would cost him the loss of the Presidency for which he was then a candidate. This argument prevailed. The invitation was accepted: and "The Independence of Hungary," coupled with the name of "Louis Kossuth, the Great Magyar," was proposed by the American minister for foreign affairs. We ourselves, calida juvenia, had what we then esteemed the high honour of being presented to the pseudo Great Magyar, at the hotel where he was sumptuously lodged and boarded at the national expense, together with his fellow-refugees; nor has time entirely effaced the vivid impression made upon our youthful fancy by the quaint costumes, and wild, unwashed faces of those hairy and hungry heroes. The quantity of champagne and tobacco which they consumed in the course of a month appeared prodigious, when their hotel bill was presented for payment to the nation.

Meanwhile, broken in health and hope, and tortured by the most terrible martyrdom which a morbidly sensitive conscience can inflict on a proud nature and a powerful intellect, the real Great Magyar was languishing in an Austrian madhouse, of which he had become the voluntary inmate. Many years afterwards we visited that establishment. Times and things had greatly changed since 1848. M. Schmerling had produced his new nostrum for the salvation of the Austrian empire; consisting of a central legislature, to which the whole kingdom of Hungary refused to send deputies. Some of the ablest organs of the English press were extolling the wisdom of the new political regime in Austria. But, already, every man adequately conversant with the social and historical conditions of this complicated empire perceived its unpractical and futile character. Every month rendered more and more apparent the necessity of promptly pacifying Hungary, and the utter impossibility of inducing her to swallow M. Schmerling's constitutional sedative. It was then that Count Rechberg, the imperial chancellor, sought an interview with the reclusive Dobling; who submitted to his excellency the detailed project of a complete policy for the constitutional government of Hungary, in harmony with the rights and interests of the Austrian crown. "Count Stephen Széchenyi," said Count Rechberg, when he returned from this interview, "has done well to select a lunatic asylum for his place of residence. His ideas are purely chimerical." The fortunes of Austria as well as Hungary, divorced from each other, grew rapidly worse and worse; and not long afterwards Count Stephen Széchenyi perished by his own hand. Had he lived but a very few years longer, he would have had the satisfaction of contemplating the complete realisation of those ideas which were considered so chimerical in 1862.

The works of Count Stephen Széchenyi are now eagerly read; and a literature, consisting of notices and biographies of the Great Magyar, has sprung into existence. A detailed journal of the daily life of the recluse of Dobling has been preserved, and lately published by an intelligent witness of its sufferings and its hopes.* Still more recently one of the most accomplished men of letters in France, M. Sainte-Rene Taillandier, has devoted to the character and career of Count Stephen Széchenyi a considerable portion of his interesting work on Bohemia and Hungary. By the aid of these ample materials, and of others derived from private sources, we now propose to reconstruct the image of the Great Magyar.

Stephen Széchenyi was born at Vienna, September 21, 1792. He was therefore only seventeen years of age when, in 1809, he fought, in the Austrian army, against the French. In 1815 he was one of the gayest, idlest, and most popular, of those young officers who helped the fine ladies of Vienna to amuse themselves while the great Congress was remaking the map of Europe. Shortly afterwards he started on the grand tour which was, at that time, an important part of every young nobleman's education. After travelling over the East, and passing years in Greece, he visited Italy, France and England. He ever afterwards spoke of this country with the most affectionate and reverent admiration; and, throughout the whole of his political career, nothing is more constantly evident, than the powerful impression made upon his mind by the industrial activity and good sense of the English people. The death of his father, Count Franz Széchenyi, recalled him in 1820 to his own country, and placed him, at the age of twenty-eight, in possession of estates which have since become very valuable and the representation of an illustrious family. At that time the chief rivalry between the great nobles of Hungary and those of Austria was a rivalry in pleasure, frivolity, and fashion. The prizes for which they contended were those of the boudoir, the salon, and the coulisses. The wealth of the magnates of Hungary was lavished on the amusement of Vienna. Pesth was a miserable provincial town. The Hungarian language was despised by the Hungarian nobility. None of them spoke it, and it is doubtful if many of them knew it. Latin was the language for state papers and serious affairs; German and French were the languages for polite society; Hungarian was the language for the stables and the pothouse. One day (it was in the year 1825) the Diet of Presburg was engaged in discussing the question of founding an academy for the cultivation of the national language. It is impossible," said one of the speakers† "except by immense pecuniary sacrifices on the part of the great proprietors. For the establishment of such an institution three things are indispensable. The first is money, the second is money, the third is money." As the speaker resumed his seat, a man standing among the spectators in the place reserved for the public, rose and said; "Gentlemen, I have no vote in this assembly, nor am I one of the great proprietors. But I possess estates, and, if an institution can be established for the revival of the Hungarian language, and for providing for the children of our race a national education, I will at once devote to that institution one year of my whole income." The gift was sixty thousand florins (about six thousand pounds). "Who is it?" was the cry from all parts of the house. It was Count Stephen Széchenyi, only known as one of the best dancers and riders at Vienna. So instantaneous and so great was the enthusiasm, that in less than a quarter of an hour the academy was founded.

Stephen Széchenyi was still in the military service of Austria; and Latin was still the only language spoken in the Hungarian Diets. The young count took his seat in the Diet of 1826, wearing the uniform of an officer of hussars. It will be difficult for our readers, at this day, either to imagine, or to understand, how great was the scandal, and how vehement

* Graf Stephan Széchenyi's staatsmanische Laufbahn seine letzten Lebensjahre in der Doblenger Irrenanstalt, und sein Tod. By Aurel von Keeskemethy. Pesth. 1866.

† It was Mr. Paul Nagy.

the indignation, when he rose, in this assembly, to address his countrymen in their native tongue. It was the first time that Hungarian had been spoken in an Hungarian Diet. The whole of the Court party and the immense majority of the Chamber were furious. The count received, the same day, a peremptory order to rejoin his regiment without a moment's delay. He replied by placing his resignation in the hands of his colonel. At the next session of the Diet he appeared dressed in the national costume, and continued to address the Chamber in the national tongue. The indignation of the Magnates, the alarm of the Bureaux, the anger of the Court, at this innovation, enable us to appreciate the wisdom of the excessive caution and patient tact, with which the regenerator of Hungary now began to feel his way, step by step, towards the ultimate attainment of the object he had resolved to achieve. He founded the Casino of Pesth; a sort of conversational lounge for young and old, modelled after the fashion of our English clubs. He started races, jocky-clubs, and various similar means and pretexts for social gatherings. The eyes of the official Argus winked and dozed again. Meanwhile, by such unpretentious means, the count (a consummate man of the world) was gradually drawing the men and minds of his own class and country into a focus on which his personal influence could exert the strongest private pressure. In the same spirit he published in 1831 a little pamphlet, *Magyar Szinhaz*, on the educational functions of the stage, written in Hungarian. In the following year the subject of this pamphlet was taken up by the Diet, and made the object of a Bill, which encountered much opposition, and was not passed before 1836. In 1837 the Magyar Theatre (the Great Magyar's first great creation) was opened at Pesth.

Meanwhile, the count had sounded his first open war-cri against the ancienne regime; not a frothy proclamation of the vices of the Vienna cabinet and the virtues of the Hungarian nation, but a vigorous attack upon the whole feudal system of Hungarian society. "It is not Austria that oppresses you," cried the author to his countrymen, "it is your own Gothic prejudices and mouldy institutions. No human power can arrest the life of a nation, if the nation be worthy to live." Your regeneration is in your own hands." The excitement occasioned by this publication was immense. Feudalism had hitherto been so strongly associated by the Hungarians with the cause of their national independence, that the condemnation of the one was regarded as an insult to the other; and the Great Magyar was accused by his own countrymen of high treason against the ancient liberties of Hungary. Count Joseph Dessewffy, a Conservative of high spirit and great ability, undertook to defend patriarchal tradition from the author of *Credit*; whom he denounced as a mischievous iconoclast in a work entitled *Analysis*. Széchenyi replied to the challenge in a book which he called *The World*. Dessewffy, overwhelmed by the tremendous antagonist whom he had invited into the lists, retired from the conflict; and the government, which had hitherto been disposed to view, if not with complete satisfaction, at least with malacious amusement, the discomfiture of an old enemy of its own—the ancient Magyarism—now took the alarm. for it began to perceive that this controversy, past and future, was being watched with ominous interest by a stranger of uncouth appearance, whose attendance had been invoked, as umpire, by the Great Magyar. This new comer was the greatest Magyar of all. It was the Magyar People.

The count's next work, *The Stadium*, was prohibited by the Austrian censor, and only found its way into Hungary from Bueharest. This work contains the sketch of a system of laws, which are now the basis of Hungarian society. Meanwhile, it was not merely with his

pen that the Great Magyar was at work. He knew that example is the best teacher. He had been preaching to his countrymen the magnificent commercial capabilities of their great natural highway, the Danube. "But the Danube is not navigable," said they. Your fault. You can make it navigable". "Pooh! you forget the Iron Gates," was the invariable reply. The count's answer to this objection was characteristic. On the quay at Pesth he built a little vessel. He launched it, and, pledging himself to steer it safely past the cataracts, embarked. Soon afterwards the whole of Hungary was ringing the contagious enthusiasm. The success of this experiment enabled Széchenyi to secure the with applause of the successful navigator. Prince Metternich himself was carried away by assistance of English capital; the splendid bridge of Pesth, the tunnel of Buda, the rectification of the course of the Theis, and the explosion of the Iron Gates, are imperishable records of his energetic genius.

Chapter II

Amongst the Magyar nobility, whose feudal supremacy was menaced and shaken by the reform movement which had been initiated in Hungary by Széchenyi, was a certain Baron Vesselényi, who resolved to obtain from personal popularity the influence he could no longer command from hereditary privilege. Vesselényi, the descendant of an ancient Palatin, was the owner of vast estates, and a seat in the Transylvanian as well as the Hungarian Diets. In character and person, this man was an exact antithesis of the great rival whom, for a time, it was his evil fortune to eclipse. Széchenyi, eminently high-bred in appearance and refined in manners, was a sincere Liberal in all his feelings as well as opinions, and his temperament was naturally gentle. He was cautious, temporising, reticent; Always preferring conciliation to violence, and compromise to conflict; an initiative thinker, with the patience of a practical statesman; a man of heart, with the tact of a man of the world; a sincere patriot, with the required self-restraint of a diplomatist. Vesselényi, with the rude bearing of democracy, combined the supercilious spirit of the old noblesse. Violent, impulsive, huge of stature, slovenly in dress, with the shaggy mane of Mirabeau, and the reckless animal spirits of Danton, men called him the Transylvanian giant.

He deserved the title. He had the limbs of a pugilist, the head of an ogre, and the heart of a wild beast. That head of his was said to be the strongest, the shaggiest, and the blackest head in Hungary. In order that we may not again have to interrupt the thread of our narrative, we will here sketch in a few words the political career of this Hungarian Græcehus. The Transylvanian Diet, of 1835, carried beyond bounds by the impetuosity of his insubordinate eloquence, was dissolved by the Austrian government, and he himself was prosecuted for the publication of a seditious harangue. The brutality of his conduct towards his peasants, however, subjected him to a more serious prosecution on the charge of cruelty and personal violence. Condemned on this charge in Transylvania, he removed into Hungary. There, exasperated by the loss of a considerable portion of his fortune, he endeavored to revolutionise some of the comitats, and was tried for high treason; the charge being founded on one of his addresses to the comitat of Szathmar. On this charge he was condemned, and thrown into prison. The lower chamber of the Diet, opposed by the chamber of Magnates, in which Széchenyi still retained a great influence, protested seventeen times against the arrest of Vesselényi; and to this protest may be referred the commencement of that hostility between the two chambers, which prepared the anarchy of 1848. The government, however, satisfied with having established the culpability of Vesselényi before the tribunals, released

him from prison, and he retired to Graefenberg. He was comprised in the general amnesty of 1840; and a course of the water cure at Graefenberg appears to have somewhat calmed his effervescent temperament; for we hear and see no more of him until 1848. Then, like a decrepit vulture, recalled to the battle field by the scent of carrion, and the scream of his kindred predatory fowl, the old giant reappears at Vienna in the factious and fatal deputation of September; blind, broken, dying; and with little of him left but his inextinguishable spirit of mischief.

In 1836, this man became the idol of the crowd. Széchényi at this time almost entirely withdrew from that political life which his own genius had evoked into activity. To the theatre of his vast industrial undertakings he now confined his activities. There he was incessantly busy; planning, creating, organising. Daily some new obstacle was surmounted, some fresh resource was developed, some further step was made good in the peaceful path of material progress. Meanwhile the popular glitter of the Transylvanian Giant was destined to be, in its turn, obscured by the rising star of a greater genius; a greater genius, but scarcely a wiser man.

In the Hungarian Diets, freedom of speech had always been practically unlimited. But there were no public reports of their debates. About this time, that is to say in 1836, certain Hungarian Magnates resolved to start a journal of which the sole function should be to supply that deficiency. Some of these noblemen had been in the habit of employing, on matters connected with their parliamentary business, a young lawyer, who earned by jobs of this kind a moderate subsistence. Favourably impressed by his intelligence and activity, they selected him for the editorship and practical management of the new journal. The young lawyer, poor, ambitious, and energetic, soon organised a small staff of scribes whose daily report of the debates in the Diet was sent in lithograph to the comitats. The Austrian government prohibited and seized the paper. Undismayed, the editor and his patrons increased their staff of scribes; and the journal continued to appear in manuscript. When the session was over, the editor, instead of suspending his journal, devoted it to similar reports of the deliberations of the comitats. These reports were of a very inflammatory character. The editor was arrested and imprisoned. The government did not venture to bring him to open trial, but he remained in prison three years. At the end of that time, a general amnesty restored him to liberty; and he immediately entered the lower chamber of the Diet, bringing with him a concentrated hatred of the Austrian government, and remarkable talents for giving effect to it. In a short time he was among the chiefs of the radical opposition in the lower chamber. The influence rapidly acquired by his astonishing eloquence he grasped with a resolute hand, and a vindictive determination to convert into a revolutionary force the liberal movement created by Széchényi. The name of this man was Louis Kossuth. Great reputations are rapidly worn out by societies which are passing through a revolutionary period; as men wear out their boots on forced marches. Doubtless the greatest benefit conferred by Count Széchényi on his country was a little group of noble characters formed by him in his own image; men, who like Deak and Eotvas, are at this moment worthily continuing his salutary policy and beneficent example. But the public mind of Hungary, in 1840, was too feverish to follow the orderly leadership of such men. Kossuth (who, having performed nothing was ready to promise everything) became the idol of the hour. And then, for the first and last time in the whole of his blameless career, the Great Magyar was for a moment untrue to his own convictions. No eloquence could disguise from his penetrating intellect the fundamental fallacies of Kossuth's revolutionary doctrine. But he seems, for a moment,

to have been intimidated by the overwhelming popularity of the new demagogue; and, only feebly deprecating the form of that doctrine, to have virtually implied his assent to the substance of it. Kossuth was fully entitled to reply, as he did, with indignant inparience: "If we are agreed as to the substance, it is puerile to quarrel about the form. Revolutions are not to be carried on by polite phrases."

Széchényi fully recognised the vexations and obstructive character of the connexion, such as it had latterly been, between Hungary and Austria; but he no less clearly perceived that the total severance of that connexion would, even were it practicable, be fatal. His object was, not to sever Hungary from the Austrian empire, but to secure to Hungary the magnificent position which he perceived her to be capable of assuming in that empire; and, by means of that empire, in Europe. His constant effort was to bring about a better understanding between the Hungarian people and the Austrian government. In one of his great speeches he says: "Fairly to appreciate the acts of the government, we must endeavour to place ourselves at its point of view. We shall then perceive that much which we are wont to attribute to Machiavelian craft, is only due to deplorable ignorance. Similarly, it is to be wished that the government should be enabled and induced to place itself more often at an Hungarian point of view—the point of view which is furnished by our constitutional regime. Otherwise, the most legitimate preoccupation on behalf of our rights will be misconstrued as seditious!"

Again, he clearly perceived that the true destinies of Hungary could only be worked out by developing the splendid natural resources of the country, and the culture and character of its people. "I have awakened my countrymen," he used to say, "in order that they may walk upright, and conduct themselves like men; not in order that they may throw themselves out of the window." How much he achieved in two short years towards the regeneration and development of Hungary is amazing. He found the national language all but unknown; he made it universal throughout Hungary, and obliged the Austrian government to adopt it as the medium of all official intercourse with its Hungarian subjects. At his creative call, a national literature and a national drama—those two great agents of culture—sprang into active life. "When," says M. Saint René Taillandier, "we compare the moral and intellectual culture of the Hungarians previous to 1830, with what they have become under the influence of Count Széchényi, the result seems scarcely credible." "Few men," wrote M. Langsdorff, in 1848, "have ever effected more for the welfare of their country than this illustrious citizen. The life of Hungary for the last twenty years has its source in him." All his instincts were practical; and of the many enterprises in which he engaged the industry of his country, none were chimerical. Kossuth, on the other hand, imagined that the independence of Hungary could be secured by severing her connexion with Austria; and that an inland state could be converted into a maritime power, by throwing public money into the Adriatic from the little port of Fiume.

It is to the genius of Széchényi that Hungary owes her present commanding position as the governing power of a great empire, of whose future destinies she is mistress. It is to the genius of Széchényi that the world is indebted for the unimpeded circulation of merchandise, passengers, and ideas, from Ratisbon to Constantinople along that great water highway which, in the event of any general maritime war, would be the only way open to the commerce of the east and west. He had to deal with a suspicious, powerful, and obstructive government; which by tact and patience he converted into an ally, securing its effective co-operation in the cause of practical reform.* Kossuth had to deal with a weak, but friendly

* Prince Metternich used to say, "the Hungarians imagine that they have invented the Danube." He was, however, one of the first shareholders in the company formed by Széchényi for its navigation.

and compliant government; and he upset it, as he upset everything else. Széchenyi found the nobility of Hungary entirely exempted from taxation, and the peasantry burdened not only by the whole of the public imposts, but also by a multiplicity of feudal obligations. without proclaiming a war of classes, he persuaded the nobility to submit to taxation, and spontaneously surrender some of their most obnoxious privileges. The equitable redemption of the remainder was in a fair way of legal settlement when all practical legislation was suspended by the revolution which Kossuth had invoked.

One last and most important particular remains to be mentioned, in which Széchenyi's opinions remain to this day far in advance of those of his countrymen—far in advance, indeed of the opinions which still prevail in England respecting the treatment of alien races. The great difficulty of Hungary, or, more properly speaking of the Magyar dominion in Hungary, was, and is, a population of more than eight hundred thousand Slavs, occupying the whole southern portion of Hungary, from the Drave to that point where the Danube, not far from Belgrade, suddenly changes its course. These Slavs, whos chief representatives in Hungary are the Croats, differ in origin, language, character, and religion from the Magyars. But the kindred families of their race (one of the most numerous in Europe) extend far beyond the limits of Hungary, occupying the whole of Servia, and the greater part of Bohemia; not to mention the vast empire from the White to the Black Sea.

Now, Széchenyi, alone of all his countrymen, saw two things very clearly. First, that the perfect amalgamation if possible, but in any case the harmonious co-existence and undisturbed co-operation of the Magyar and Slavonic populations of Hungary, is absolutely necessary for the safety and unity of the kingdom. Secondly, that the supremacy of the Magyar element in Hungary could only be secured by conciliation and political tact. While his natural justice and humanity revolted from the idea of forcibly suppressing the Slavonic nationality in Hungary, his strong common sense enabled him to perceive how plausible a pretext any such attempt would afford the Austrian government, for crippling the development of the Magyar nationality by reverting to its old policy of divide et impera, and setting the Croats against the Hungarians. In one of his speeches, a speech which might be studied with advantage by every Englishman who shares the inherited responsibility of governing Ireland and India, there are some words which appear to us to be of rare political sagacity "What method shall we adopt for communicating to the different races established on Hungarian soil the sentiment of our own nationality? There is only one way in which we can, or ought to, induce others to recognise our superiority, and that is by making ourselves their moral and intellectual superiors. Remember, therefore, that your salvation depends, not on the assertion of political power, but the cultivation of personal virtue. The success of the national policy depends on the character and conduct of each individual. Above all things it is necessary to acquire the gift of pleasing, and to cultivate the faculty of attracting others. The secret of power is sympathy. We may impose the Magyar language upon unwilling lips, we may thrust the Magyar costume upon alien races, and float our national colours from one end of Hungary to the other; but pray what shall we have gained if we have not gained the hearts and affections of those whom we aspire to rule? And, trust me, the art of gaining hearts is the art of governing men. He who lacks sympathy lacks wisdom; and we are unfit for the noble task of government if we are unable to respect in others the sentiments and aspiration which we respect in ourselves; most unfit for such a task, if in dealing with sensitive and generous adversaries, enthusiastic, like ourselves, for the traditions of their race, we treat with supercilious contempt emotions which we have not endeavored to understand."

Unhappily for Hungary, these wise warnings were neglected. One of the first uses to which Kossuth put the power entrusted to him by the Revolution, was the forcible extinction of the Slavonic nationality in Hungary. In the name of the Hungarians, who had so recently extorted from Austria the free use of their own language, he prohibited to the Slavs the use of *their* language—a language to which they were passionately attached. The treatment of the Slavs in Hungary by Kossuth was, in almost every respect, worse than the treatment of the Hungarians by Metternich and Schwartzberg.

If Count Széchényi's loyalty to his own principles had been for a moment shaken by the enthusiasm which greeted the enunciation of a policy essentially antagonistic to them, it was *only* for a moment. In 1847 he addressed to the nation and its new tribune these remarkable words:

"The nation will be shaken to pieces. And in that day the faithful and serious servants of her cause, remembering how great was the height to which she might have risen, and beholding how deep is the abyss into which she has been thrust, will have no refuge from despair, save in prayer to God. And you, Kossuth, you in whose heart and honour I will yet believe, what anguish must be yours when, amidst the ruins of a monomaniac's hopes, your conscience compels you to make this confession: 'I believed myself filled with the wisdom which establishes states; but I was filled only with the dreams of a disordered imagination. I deemed myself a prophet, yet have I foreseen nothing, and failed even to comprehend the simplest events which were passing under my eyes. In my infatuation I mistook myself for a creative genius. I was but a feverish schemer. I aspired to command others. I could not govern myself. It was my boast to be the benefactor of my country. It is my shame to have been only the puppet of all her popular passions. I proclaimed myself the Messiah of a new political gospel, and I was but a well-meaning and unwise philanthropist, encouraging idleness and misery by gratuitous distributions of bread-crumbs. With the power which should have regenerated and consolidated a nation, I have but organised a huge national hospital.' When that miserable hour is come (and come be sure it will; for the imaginary world you are now building upon chaos has no more reality than the mirage), what consolation will remain to you in the memory of your work? O hasten—in the sacred name of our common country, I beseech you—hasten to leave this perilous path of revolutionary agitation! You will not hear me? The voice of popular favour is loud and sweet! Well then, when that voice has become the voice of those that mourn you shall not be able to assert, 'the entire nation shared the error of my dreams.' Here and now, I summon you to remember in that hour, that one voice of expostulation was raised, and raised in time, but that you would not listen to its warning cry."

Chapter III

The explosion of royalty in France was echoed by similar detonations throughout the continent of Europe in 1848. Disturbances at Vienna, which the government mistook for an émeute, proved to be a revolution. Truly or falsely, the Hungarian Radicals claimed the chief authorship of it. In any case, the immediate effect of it was to place Louis Kossuth at the head of affairs in Hungary; and his first act was to send a deputation to the court of Vienna. This deputation was instructed to demand the immediate formation of a responsible and purely Magyar ministry for the kingdom; universal suffrage; and the removal of the Hungarian Diet, from Presburg to Pesth. True to his habitual policy of making the best of every bad business, Széchényi, though he neither shared all the hopes which accompanied, nor approved all the demands which were confided to, this deputation, consented to join

it. It was doubtless owing to his influence that the deputation was authorised to declare the determination of the Hungarian nation to remain indissolubly united with the empire. The enthusiasm with which the deputies were received on their return, to Pesth, was unbounded; and a provisional government was immediately formed in which Széchényi, from the motives which had already induced him to join the deputation, consented, though most reluctantly, to become the colleague of Kossuth. It was not a moment in which any sincere patriot had the right to remain passive. There is profound wisdom in Solon's law which obliged every citizen, on pain of confiscation and banishment, to take active part with one or other of the contending factions in case of civil tumult. On which Aulus Gellius shrewdly observes that the persons most likely to remain passive on such occasions are those whose active participation in affairs is most to be desired, viz., the wisest and most honest members of the community, who should, therefore, be compelled to throw the weight of their personal influence into the scale of politics, whenever politics are most in danger of falling into the hands of intriguers or enthusiasts.

We cannot more vividly depict the painful condition of Count Széchényi's mind during these events than by translating the words of a private letter which has been addressed to us on this subject by an intimate friend of the Great Magyar.

"We passed the evening of the 14th of March" (1848), says our correspondent, "with him at Presburg. The air was full of rumors, and the news that reached us from Vienna became more and more alarming, as the night advanced. Confusion at the Burg; revolution in the streets; Metternich flying from the mob. Széchényi appeared profoundly agitated by the terrible vision which his prophetic imagination already revealed to him. Turning to us, his whole frame quivering with emotion, and in language which seemed to burn with the sarcastic bitterness of a sublime despair, he predicted the miseries which were coming on our country. Massacre in the name of liberty; despotism and disorder in the name of independence; incapacity, folly, and disaster everywhere. The Slavs legitimately and overwhelmingly armed against us; war with our own fellow-citizens; inevitable defeat. We ourselves could not then realise the yet-unheard-of possibility of a nobleman being hanged. Imagine, then, our feelings when we heard him describe, in language horrible from its passionate picturesqueness, how the noblest heads in Hungary would fall beneath the axe of the Austrian headsman, when a government at Vienna had regained undisputed possession of this devoted country. Then, growing more and more excited, he went on to depict to us the appalling scene of a public execution in which he himself should be the victim. Every terrible detail of it was powerfully impressed upon us. We seemed to hear and see it all. The short, illegal trial—the hasty condemnation—the desperate efforts of a few devoted friends to obtain a pardon, or at least a reprieve—the impossibility of getting access to the emperor. The hours—the last hours of a life so dear to us are fleeting by—with what agony are we yet watching for the arrival of the courier who never arrives, with the white handkerchief waving over the heads of the crowd, to stay the execution! He ascends the scaffold—he is in the hands of the headsman—there is a shout from those beneath the hideous railing—his head falls, rolls . . . Even at this distance of time I cannot recall that imaginary scene without a shudder. We were all present at it, so strangely did his words affect us.

"The next evening (it was the eve of the departure of the deputation to our King Ferdinand,) Kossuth harangued the people from the balcony of the hotel Grunbaum. He stood between Teleky and Louis Batthiany; and turning to the latter exclaimed: 'No, we shall not return from Vienna without an Hungarian ministry! and see, here is our future premier!' At those words a thousand cljens filled the air. The next day two vessels conducted the deputation, escorted by a numerous and enthusiastic following, all young men, to Vienna.

They obtained everything they asked. Two days afterwards the banks of the Danube were covered with a crowd of people literally drunk with delight. The vessels arrived from Presburg, decked out in the national colours. It was a magnificent day in March, bright and warm and clear. Everyone was in high spirits. The deputation landed under a cloudless sky, across which, just as they alighted, sprang a splendid rainbow; the finest I ever saw. We all thought it a sign of good omen. Louis Batthiany was the first to land. His head was bowed. Széchényi came next, sombre, silent, calm. Kossuth, the idol of our youth, seemed transported with satisfaction and full of confidence. He carried his head high, and talked and laughed loudly. The ministry walked to the hotel Grunen Baum, and showed themselves to the people from the balcony. The enthusiasm was immense. Széchényi received his wife and friends with the air of a man thoroughly fatigued and profoundly discouraged. He had no faith whatever in the promises of Vienna. Moreover, though his nature was singularly lofty and disinterested, I think he could not but feel that the place assigned to him in the new ministry was altogether unworthy of his merits.* He had never liked or trusted Kossuth, and had only joined his government, in the hope of thereby finding some means to withhold the ear of Liberty from the abyss into which Kossuth was rapidly driving it. When the ministers reached Pesth, they were received with enthusiastic ovations by a people wild with joy and hope. Széchényi walked home leaning on the arm of a friend to whom he said, as they passed through the crowd: "The raptures of this infatuated and illfated people fill me with pity. I can liken them to nothing but a herd of cattle which has just been turned loose into a rich pasture, to be fattened up for the butcher."

On the 23rd of March, the new ministry was constituted. Louis Batthiany (who a few months later was publicly executed by order of Haynau) now undertook the presidency of the council, at the urgent request of the Archduke Stephen, who was at this time Palatin of the kingdom, and who invoked the assistance of Batthiany and Széchényi in the desperate attempt to control the revolution which they feared and deprecated no less than the Palatin himself. Prince Paul Eszterhazy accepted the absurd portfolio for foreign affairs, which he afterwards resigned when it became evident that no loyal subject of the King of Hungary could hold office in the Kossuth cabinet. Mézaros took the ministry of war; Deak, justice; Klauzal, agriculture and commerce; Eotvos, public instruction; Széchényi, public works; Kossuth (the soul of the new ministry), finance.

The ministry was scarcely formed before it had to grapple with two great difficulties, which forcibly demonstrated the wisdom of Széchényi. The first was the insurrection of the Italians; the second, the opposition of the Croats.

Should the Hungarian government furnish troops to assist the King of Hungary and The Emperor of Austria, in his war with Charles Albert of Piedmont? If so, would it not be attacking in Italy those rights of nationality to which it owed its own existence in Hungary? Should it then refuse troops for the Italian campaign? If so, that would be a violation of the fundamental pact between the kingdom and the crown, and tantamount to open rupture with Austria. This delicate question was still in debate, when the whole position of the ministry became complicated by the conduct of the Croats, whom Kossuth's attempts to stifle by force the nationality of a population of eight hundred thousand souls had exasperated beyond endurance. The Slavo-Croatian Diet had just elected Baron Jellachich of Bueszin, to the representation of their national rights and feelings, as Ban of Croatia.

* It was the Department of Public Works.

Jellachich refused obedience to the summons he immediately received from Kossuth to appear before the Diet of Pesth. Meanwhile a new revolution had broken out at Vienna, and the Emperor had fled to Innspruck. An understanding was quickly effected between the revolutionary cabinets of Pesth and Vienna; and the Ban of Croatia was summoned in the name of the Emperor to appear at Innspruck and render account of his conduct to his imperial master.

Will Jellachich obey this summons? It finds him installed in his new dignity at Agram, with more than kingly pomp, and far more than kingly power. He is receiving hourly deputations, not only from all parts of Croatia, but from Servia even, and the Slavonic comitats of the North. His intentions are yet unknown. Myriads of armed men are daily swarming to the standard which he has not yet unfurled. He is the hero of all hearts; he is the chief of a vast tribe who regard him as the armed prophet of their national faith; he is the master of those terrible Croat regiments whose savage valour, splendid drill, and boundless devotion to their leader, have been unequalled since the days of Attila. Such was the position and power of the man who was now invited to surrender himself into the hands of his enemies; in the name of a sovereign notoriously their helpless puppet, and virtually their prisoner.

Early in the month of July, Jellachich was at Innspruck. He assured the Emperor that, if the Croats had not already marched to the defence of the Empire in Italy, it was because they were unhappily still obliged to defend at home their own soil from Magyar usurpation. The Archduke John was intrusted to negotiate a better understanding between the Ban and the Hungarian ministry. Batthiany's hands were tied, however, by the Radical majority in his cabinet, and the pretensions on both sides proved irreconcilable. "Farewell" said Batthiany, when they parted for the last time on the Croatian frontier, "we shall meet again I suppose, on the banks of the Drave." "No," replied Jellachich, "on the banks of the Danube."

Kossuth became at last seriously alarmed. He began to draw closer to his Conservative colleagues. But it was too late. The Emperor was now implored by the Kossuth cabinet, to negotiate again, as King of Hungary, on behalf of the kingdom, with the Ban of Croatia, and endeavour to obtain terms for the Hungarians from those Croats whom the Hungarians had insulted and outraged. At the same time the levy of Hungarian regiments for the support of Austria in Italy, and one hundred millions of florins for the same purpose were voted, at the demand of the ministry, by the Diet of Pesth. A patriot not in the secret of the minister's anxieties protested against this measure, and demanded the recall of those Hungarian regiments already in Lombardy. "Fool!" said Kossuth, "do you forget that in those regiments there are more Croats than Magyars, and soon enough we shall have the Croats upon us, more than we need?" A stipulation was made, however that the Emperor, if victorious in Italy, should acquiesce in the autonomy of a Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, under the sceptre of the House of Hapsburg. Whilst Kossuth was still wording impracticable proposals to Austria, the Emperor, victorious in Italy, had made common cause with the Croats against Hungary, and Jellachich with his terrible bands was already on the march.

The Hungarian treasury was empty, and the nation, without any adequate means of military defence, was menaced on all sides. The situation was frightful. But it had at least the advantage of being definite; and, so far, it must have afforded relief to the mind of such a man as Kossuth. Only one course was now left to him—open rupture with Austria. He adopted it without a moment's hesitation. Envoys were despatched from Pesth to Paris and Frankfort, in the desperate hope of obtaining foreign assistance for the dislocation of the empire. Two hundred millions of utterly worthless paper money were issued, and made forced currency on pain of death. Kossuth himself, ill, suffering from acute physical pain and exhaustion, pale, haggard, and so weak that he could not walk alone, was supported in

the arms of two friends to his place in the chamber. "Citizens," he exclaimed, "the time for dreaming is over. At this moment we stand alone in the world. Single-handed we are left to combat the conspiracy which has united against us all the sovereigns and peoples by whom we are surrounded. I repeat it. We stand utterly alone. Fellow-citizens, are you ready to fight for your lives and liberties?"

The situation thus described by Kossuth on the 11th of July, 1848, was precisely what Széchenyi had foreseen and predicted as the inevitable result of the policy so vehemently preached to the nation by Kossuth in 1847.

Chapter IV

I found my countrymen heavily sleeping in the darkness of night. I waked them from slumber. I exhorted them to light their streets and squares, so that they might see clearly, and walk safely. But, instead of lamps, it is torches that they have kindled; and by way of lighting the town, they have set fire to it. None of us will now be able to extinguish the conflagration, and when men ask who was the incendiary, alas, must I not answer, 'It was I, I, who 'murdered sleep?'

These words of Count Széchenyi's were repeated to us by a friend of the count's to whom he uttered them. When Széchenyi consented to join the Batthiany administration, he thereby consummated the last great sacrifice which can be rendered by a noble nature to a desperate cause. It was not merely his life that he offered up on the altar of a nation whose leader he had ceased to be. It was not merely the legitimate claims of a great name that he surrendered. It was the fair fame of a blameless life, and the peace of an acutely sensitive conscience. His refusal to enter the cabinet would have been the final abandonment of his country in the moment of her extremest need. The Batthiany administration could not have been formed without him; for he was still the Great Magyar.

Count Edmond Ziehi was, in those days, minister of police at Pesth. He had the "petites entrees" to the Archduke Palatine. On the morning which brought to Pesth the news of the revolution at Vienna, the count called on His Imperial and Royal Highness, whom he found before a Psyche glass, waxing his long moustaches with Olympian calm. After listening to the report of his minister,

"Well," said the archduke, "I know all that; but what is to be done?"

"Every thing," replied Count Ziehi. "All depends on the firmness and energy of your highness during the next three days. All the respectable men in Hungary are afraid of revolution, and will rally round you (if you give them the means of doing so) to prevent it. The troops are sound. I will answer for the National Guard. You have only two things to avoid. On the one hand you must not offend the public feeling by any appearance of menace; on the other, you must keep the military force from being undisciplined and demoralised by fraternisation with the populace. Concentrate them within their barracks. I will be responsible for all other precautionary measures. Meanwhile, lose not a moment in dissolving, or at least proroguing, the Diet. Until the Emperor's safety is secured, and his authority re-established, our paramount obligation is to save the empire from anarchy."

This advice was warmly supported by the unfortunate Count Lamberg, who arrived during the interview.

"I will think it over," said the archduke. "Call again to-morrow, for orders." But the next day his only orders were, "Call again to-morrow." On the third day, instead of being immediately admitted to the Palatine, Count Edmond was detained for some hours in the archduke's antechamber, tete-a-tete with the afterwards influential Count Grun,

then aide-de-camp to the archduke. The aide-de-camp was breakfasting. The minister, who had not tasted food for forty-eight hours, was worn out with fatigue and hunger. At last the door of the presence chamber opened, and the principal Conservative magnates of Hungary passed across the anteroom in gloomy procession; like Macbeth's ghastly kings. The first, in silence, made a sign to Zichi indicative of despair and disgust. The second exclaimed, "All is lost! That man is betraying us," pointing to the door of the archbishop's room. The third said, "We are wading knee-deep in mud." And a fourth added, "To-morrow it will be neck-deep in blood."

At last came Stephen Széchenyi, who beckoned to Zichi, and said, "Well, son, what is your opinion?"

Zichi rapidly explained to Széchenyi the advice which, three days before, he had vainly urged on the Palatine. "To-day," he added, "I am aware that all such measures would be too late: and I now propose the immediate arrest of Batthiany, Kossuth, and Teleky."

Széchenyi mused a moment and then answered with a sigh. "That also is too late. Go, my son. You will see." At the same moment, Zichi was called to the archduke's presence.

"Well, count, and what do you advise to-day?" asked his highness. Zichi repeated to the archduke what he had just been saying to Széchenyi. "A grave step," said his highness. "I must think it over. Call again to-morrow."

On the morrow, the men who issued from the audience chamber were Batthiany, Kossuth, and Teleky. Batthiany, pale with rage, went up to Zichi and said. "Yesterday, thou wouldst have arrested us. Take care we do not arrest thee to-morrow, for shouldst thou fall into our hands we will hang thee." The Palatine had betrayed his own minister; by whom the foregoing scene was related to the present writer.

All that now happened Széchenyi had predicted, and vainly endeavored to avert. He knew that Austria was as necessary to Hungary as Hungary to her; and he had the common sense to perceive that Austria had the additional advantage of being necessary to the equilibrium of Europe, and that Europe would not passively assent to the annihilation of the Austrian Empire. He foresaw that war with Austria could have but one result for Hungary: utter defeat and prostration. He knew that such a defeat would involve the loss, perhaps for ever, of all he had lived, and laboured, and hoped for. It was in the bitterness of this knowledge that he exclaimed to many, by whom his words will never be forgotten: "My life is defeated, my work is destroyed, this nation is doomed, and all is lost!"

Haunted, daily and nightly, by the visions of this fearful *clairvoyance*, he persuaded himself that it was he who stood alone responsible to God and man for the misery he foresaw. It was not Kossuth; for Kossuth wished what he was bringing about. Kossuth was an irresponsible monomaniac. It was not the cabinet of Vienna which had good cause to complain of the Hungarians, and was now struggling for its very existence. It was not the Hungarians themselves; for who but a dreamer would expect a whole people, and a singularly impulsive people, to outspeed time, and pass at one stride, without stumbling, from centuries of feudalism into the most experimental and complex form of modern society? It was not the Croats, who had been wronged by his countrymen. Nor was it Jellachich, who, whilst avenging the wrongs of his race, remained loyal to his sovereign, and stood forth before Europe as the saviour of a great and ancient empire. It was Széchenyi himself; he only who had "murdered sleep". He was the culprit, for he it was who first disturbed the lethargy of the past, without being able to control the activities of the present; and who roused the

demon whom he could not command. So he reasoned. The reasoning was erroneous; but its error was that of a noble nature, and he pursued it with unflinching self-torture to its horrible conclusion.

Chapter V

We must for a moment recall attention to the date in Hungarian history which this narrative has now reached.

From the 16th of March to the 5th of July, the Austrian government, expelled from its capital, disorganised and thoroughly discouraged, submits, without even a semblance of remonstrance, to each condition imposed on its weakness by the growing impatience of Kossuth. Each new concession, however, is secretly recorded as a debt, which Vienna statesmen are resolved that Hungary shall some day repay with interest, if they in turn, should ever get a chance of dictating terms. During the months of July and August, the Austrian government begins to recover self-confidence, and secretly encourages resistance in all quarters to the Revolutionary government at Pesth. The two cabinets, however, continue to avoid an open rupture; and the Emperor's authority is assailed under cover of the King of Hungary's. With the first days of September, a new epoch begins. Each government drops the mask, and hostile preparations are pushed forward on both sides. In the first week of that month, the Austrian Lieutenant-General Hrabowsky, who commands the imperial troops throughout the comitats of Croatia and Slavonia, spontaneously surrenders his command to Jellachich: who at once assumes it, in the name of the Emperor, and is forthwith master of a compact and well-organised military power. On the 10th of September the Hungarian Diet despatches another deputation to the Emperor, who receives the Magyar deputies at Schoenbrun, the Versailles of Austria, the famous residence of Maria Theresa. The language of the deputation is haughty, insolent, dictatorial. It summons the King of Hungary to Pesth, demands the royal sanction to the Hungarian paper money already issued, and claims that the military resources of the Empire shall be placed at the disposal of the Magyar cabinet, for resistance to the Croats. The language of the King-emperor is cold, cautious, evasive. The state of his health will not permit him to visit Pesth at present. As to the paper money, he will consider. He has already advised the Ban of Croatia not to reject any conciliatory overtures which may be addressed to him by the Hungarians. In profound and ominous silence, the deputation withdraws. On quitting the halls and gardens of Schoenbrun, each deputy tears from his hat the Austro-Hungarian colours, and replaces them by the red cockade. The fiction of revolutionary government carried on in the king's name is at an end.

On the 11th of September, the great Ban let his army of Croats across the Drave, advanced without opposition to the Danube, and planted the imperial standard on the fortress of Essig. His march was preceded by a proclamation, in which he declared that he entered the plains of Hungary, not as a foe, but as a friend—not to withdraw from the Magyar race a single privilege to which the royal sanction had recently been given, but to rescue the constitution of Hungary and her sister kingdoms from the tyranny of a rebellious, odious, and incapable faction. Meanwhile, the Emperor refused to sanction the paper money issued by the Hungarian government, and the Hungarian government replied by proclaiming guilty of high treason and to be *punishable with death*, all who had refused to accept the new assignats as legal tender. The troops were, at the same time, ordered to the Croatian frontier. Mécszaros, the Magyar minister of war, took command of them in person. But a great part of his army was composed of Slavs and Germans, whose disposition he could not trust; and the Transylvanian regiment, composed of Wallachs, mutinied at Szegedin, whither they had been led by forced marches, and returned to their old quarters. Batthiany, at his wits'

end, called the cabinet together. It met at the house of Kossuth. Széchenyi was present with all the other ministers. Silent, motionless, his face buried in his hands, he appeared unconscious of all that was passing around him. Suddenly he rose, and left the room, without a word to any of his colleagues. Ten minutes afterwards he returned to fetch his portfolio, which he had forgotten. Seizing it with a convulsive grasp, he then turned to Kossuth, and said: "You won't hang me, will you, Kossuth?"

"Why should I hang you?" asked Kossuth, laughing. "But promise me, promise me, that I shall not be hanged by your orders!"

"Well; since you insist on it, I promise."

"Thanks! thanks!"

He pressed the hand of Kossuth, thrust his portfolio under his arm, and hastened out of the room, again in great agitation.

This anecdote is cited by M. Saint-René Taillandier, from the History of the Hungarian Revolution by Mr. Daniel Iranyi, to whom Kossuth himself related it. "About the same time, perhaps it was the evening of that very day," adds M. Saint-René Taillandier, "some of the count's most intimate friends were met together and talking with him. The conversation naturally turned on what was then occupying all minds. The count himself, strangely excited, his face bathed in tears, his eyes flashing with prophetic fire, exclaimed: 'The stars are dripping blood. I see blood everywhere, nothing but blood! Brother will massacre brother, race exterminate race. Barbarian hordes will reduce to ashes the entire fabric we have so long and lovingly laboured to build up. My life is overthrown. On the vault of heaven I see written in characters of fire the name of Kossuth, flagellum Dei!'"

The rumor spread through Hungary, through Europe. For one moment the attention of the civilized world was withdrawn from the fate of empires, and concentrated on the prostrate image of a single man, when it was whispered across Europe, "Széchenyi has gone mad."

The count's family, unprepared for such an event, had quitted Pesth. The calamity was first revealed to the count's servants. The servants imparted their impressions to Dr. Paul Balogh, a medical man of eminence and ability. The doctor besought the count to leave Pesth. He replied, "I am one of the ministers of Hungary; and the enemies of Hungary are at the gates." In a moment of utter exhaustion and discouragement, however, he was borne away from Pesth by the watchful doctor. At Vorosvar the carriage stopped to change horses. The count contrived to escape from it and was with difficulty recaptured in the endeavour to return to the scene of his long martyrdom. Once, his attendants were only just in time to snatch from his hand the pistol he was about to fire on himself. At Gran, he again escaped from his friendly guardian, and flung himself into the river. The crew of a vessel at that moment descending the stream, succeeded in saving from its waves the creator of the navigation of the Danube. At Wieselburg he, a third time, broke loose from his keepers, and ran through the town screaming in agony: "I am on fire! I burn!"

At last the travellers reached Dobling. It is a quiet pretty little village, so near Vienna that the recent growth of the Austrian capital has now almost converted into a suburb. It still retains, however, its rural aspect, and is sprinkled with green garden lawns, and enfolded by the sheltering slopes of richly-wooded hills. There, still stands the "asylum" of Dr. Gorgen. An asylum it deserves to be called. We have often visited it. There, Dr. Balogh deposited his noble patient; and there Count Stephen Széchenyi was still living when the present writer first visited Vienna, nine years ago. Ah, and at that time the *ci-devant* great Prince Metternich was still living also! Surely it is not years but ideas

which mark the progress of time. From the moment of his arrival at Dobling, the condition of the count's health fluctuated in such precise correspondence with the fluctuating fortunes of his country, that henceforth he may be regarded as the living individualised embodiment of the sufferings of a whole nation.

Chapter VI

Which was the madder world of the two? The world inside or the world outside, the walls of the Dobling Hospital?

It has been stated in previous chapters that at the commencement of the conflict between Magyar and Croats, the Imperial Government, then completely submissive to the Revolutionary Cabinet of Pesth, openly disavowed and condemned the conduct of its destined savior, the great Ban.

The Archduke Stephen, when he opened the Hungarian Diet, had been instructed to declare on behalf of the King-emperor, the grief with which the King's paternal heart had been afflicted by the attempt of the Croatians to resist the laws of the Diet, on the pretext that those laws were not the free expression of his majesty's will. "Some persons," added the Palatine "have even gone so far as to pretend that their resistance to the Diet is undertaken in the interests of the royal house, and with the knowledge and approval of his majesty.

Our only comment upon this shall be the citation of a single passage from the correspondence, subsequently intercepted, between Jellachich and the Emperor. The Ban writes, "I entreat your forgiveness, sire; but I am resolved to save your majesty's empire. If the empire must fall, let who will live on. I, at least, will not survive it."

From Essig to Funkirchen the Ban had marched without resistance. There, Lake Balaton—an inland sea somewhat larger than the lake of Geneva—forms the base of a triangle, of which the two sides are traced by the Drave and the Danube, Croatia being at its apex. Turning the western corner of the lake, Jellachich reached the castle of Kesthely. From Kesthely to Stuhlweissemburg, the road is guarded, on one side by the waters of Lake Balaton, on the other by the mountain slopes of the forest of Bakony. The whole of that part of the country is inhabited by a mixed population of Germans and Hungarians, through which Jellachich led his army without encountering any opposition; and, possessing himself of the ancient capital of the Hungarian kings and the tomb of St. Stephen, he encamped his forces within a day's journey of Pesth. The excitement occasioned by this alarming intelligence dealt the coup de grace to the moderate party in the Hungarian Cabinet: already weakened by the loss of Széchenyi, and discredited by the failure of its attempts at compromise and conciliation.

The moment they were relieved of Széchenyi's presence, the radicals had resolved to get rid of all their conservative colleagues at one stroke. They calculated that, if the ministry were broken up, the only persons able to form another would be themselves. They therefore placed their resignation in the hands of the Palatine, fully persuaded that his imperial and royal highness would not venture to accept it. The archduke, however, disappointed that expectation by taking them at their word. The vexation of their partisans, who commanded the majority in the chamber, was excessive, and was so unpleasantly evinced that the Palatine soon afterwards quitted Pesth in disgust. On his way to Vienna he passed the outposts of the Ban's army; and it is said that he there encountered his cousin, the young Archduke Frederick. If so, he could no longer have had any doubt as to the real policy and personal sentiments of the Emperor, in whose hands he placed his own resignation as soon as he reached Vienna.

Batthiany now attempted to form a new cabinet from which Kossuth and all the radicals were to be excluded. In the existing temper of the country such an attempt was, from every point of view preposterous; but its failure was precipitated by the rejection of a demand brought before the National Assembly at Vienna on the 17th of September by a deputation from the Hungarian Diet; which, with Vesselényi at the head of it, was charged to solicit assistance against the Croats. The deputation had only just returned empty-handed, when the news reached Pesth that the enemy was within a day's journey of the Magyar capital. Kossuth, borne to the summit of power on the shoulders of an alarmed and intensely excited people, was immediately proclaimed Dictator. The National Guard, under the command of the two Huniady's, was ordered forward to arrest the advance of Jellachich. Meanwhile, Kossuth himself mounted the tribune, and, in one of his most impassioned orations, appealed to every member of the house to work with him "spade in hand at the fortifications of the town," while their wives and daughters were "boiling oil and lead to pour upon the head of the invader."

It was at this critical moment that the Emperor issued a manifesto "to his faithful subjects in Hungary," informing them that, in the absence of the Palatine, and every other constitutional authority, he had invested with full powers Field-Marshal Count Lamberg for the restoration of order throughout the kingdom, and had appointed the count Commander-in-chief of the military forces in Hungary.

The modern capital of Hungary consists of two cities, separated by the Danube; or, more properly speaking, it consists of a city and a citadel, between which the broad and rapid current of the great river flows down to its eastern goal. On the right bank of the river, that is to say, on the side first reached by any traveller from the Austrian capital, on the site of the ancient residence of the Turkish pashas, and commanding from its airy eminence one of the most spacious and exhilarating prospects in the world, stands the great modern stronghold of Buda. Beneath it, on the same side of the river, is one of those small towns which in former times the shelter of a strong fortress always created around it. On the left bank of the river, and immediately opposite to this ancient acropolis, is Pesth, the modern capital. The city and the citadel are now connected by a magnificent bridge, one of the creations of Stephen Széchenyi. In 1848, however, they were united only by a bridge of boats, and the two together comprised a population of about one hundred and fifty thousand souls.

Count Lamberg arrived at Buda on the evening of the 29th of September. Kossuth, who had proclaimed the decree of the King of Hungary to be null and void, was resolved to oppose the viceroy's entry into Pesth. During the night of the 28th, scythes and pitchforks were distributed to a mob of peasants who had flocked into Pesth from all the surrounding districts.

Count Lamberg, who desired to confer with the Austrian commandant before crossing the river, alighted at the fortress of Buda. He was unaccompanied by any escort, and was either ignorant of the danger that menaced him, or fatally indifferent to it. Scarcely had he quitted the fortress, when it was burst into by a band of armed ragamuffins, who entered the apartments of the commandant, demanding, with brandished weapons and homicidal yells, that the unfortunate count should be delivered up to them. After searching the fortress, in all directions they left it in pursuit of their victim. Meanwhile, the imperial plenipotentiary was quietly crossing the bridge in a hackney coach. Before it reached the other side of the river, however, the carriage was encountered and arrested by another band of assassins.

One of these ruffians felled the count by a blow upon the head from behind. Another dragged him out of the vehicle. Some National Guards, who had witnessed the assault which they might have prevented, now hastened to the assistance of the murdered man. Lamberg, bruised, bleeding, but still alive, lifted aloft the letters of the Emperor, and waved them in the air: apparently under the delusion that the butchers into whose hands he had fallen, would respect in his person that of their king, whom he represented. At the same time, the wounded man asked to be conducted to the house of Kossuth. While the unhappy man was yet speaking, half a dozen scythes and pitchforks were plunged into his body. The mob then tore every shred of clothing from the mangled and quivering carcass, and dragged it through the streets of Pesth. Meanwhile the other band of assassins, returning from Buda, dipped their arms in the pool of gore which marked the spot where their prey had already fallen, and dyed in the blood of that viceroy of an hour the banners under which they marched. Thus was the red flag raised in Pesth.

The following is an extract from a manifesto of the Emperor, which was issued on the 30th of October, that is to say, four days after the massacre of Count Lamberg:

"We, Ferdinand, Emperor, and Constitutional King, &c., &c., &c.,—To our great grief and indignation, the Hungarian Diet has suffered itself to be led away by Louis Kossuth and his partisans into a series of illegalities. It has even issued decrees in direct violation of our royal authority, and has recently adopted a resolution against our plenipotentiary, Count Lamberg, in virtue of which, before the count could present his full power, he was attacked and barbarously murdered. In these circumstances it is our duty to decree as follows," &c.

The provisions of the manifesto are then enumerated. Immediate dissolution of the Hungarian Diet, and nullification of all laws passed by that body without the royal sanction. Martial law throughout the Kingdom of Hungary. Lieutenant Field-Marshal Jellachich, Ban of Croatia, is appointed commander-in-chief of the forces, and royal commissary-general for Hungary, with unlimited powers. The Ban is charged with the punishment of the murderers of Count Lamberg.

To this decree, the Hungarian Diet replied by declaring itself a national assembly in permanent session, and organising a committee of public safety, under the dictatorship of Kossuth.

Chapter VII

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm and affection with which the motley army of Jellachich regarded their great leader. "We will follow thee," they cried, "to the ends of the world; and at Buda we will give thee the crown of St. Stephen." Jellachich had three great qualities for command, two of them rare: youth, genius, and the heroic temperament. He was not only a soldier, but a poet—a poet, because being a born warrior, and not a military pedant, his actions were the offspring of ideas; a soldier, because all true poets *are* soldiers by the force of manly emotion, and in the cause of noble sentiments.* When he spoke of the Emperor, he said, "our father;" when he spoke to his soldiers, he said, "my children." His personal appearance was commanding solely by force of expression. In stature he was somewhat under the average height: his physical frame was slight; and his countenance, which had that mobility peculiar to the Slavonic race, was easily affected by the fatigue of anxious thought or bodily effort. But he had the eye of a leader of men—an eye luminous, intense and deeply caverned under a shaggy brow. His soldiers and his countrymen called him

* His poems were published at Vienna in 1850

"Father." His sovereign and the empire called him "Savior." Kossuth called him "Brigand." Posterity will probably remember him as a great, broken-hearted man.

Here—since it is only for a moment that the image of the great Ban passes across the limited field of vision which belongs to our present point of view—here, is the place to mention that the imperial promises on which he implicitly relied were never realized; that as soon as the empire was saved, its saviours were forgotten. The Croats were transferred from King Log to King Stork; and Croatia, instead of being Magyarised by the haughty Hungarians, was Germanised by the Vienna bureaucracy. The intellect of Jellachich did not long survive the betrayal of all he had lived and fought for, and the proved faithlessness of all he had trusted. He died in 1859, like his great contemporary, Széchenyi, a madman.

It is time, however, to return to Stuhlweissenburg. When Jellachich assured the Hungarians that he did not intend to deprive the Magyar nationality of a single constitutional privilege, he spoke the truth. When he assured the Empire that he was resolved not to survive the empire, he also spoke the truth. To save and restore the empire, in order to establish securely, under the safeguard of its paternal supremacy, the equal national rights of all its constituent populations, was the object for which he was now fighting. He had marched with such rapidity upon Stuhlweissenburg that his heavy guns had been purposely left behind; and in his first encounters with the Hungarian forces—who, though less numerous, had the advantage of superior artillery, and fought with immense gallantry—he experienced heavy losses, and fell back upon Raab.

The Magyars claimed a great victory, and it was reported throughout Europe that the army of Jellachich was in full retreat. The fact is, however, that Jellachich, who was still awaiting reinforcements from Vienna, had wisely resolved not to risk the annihilation of his army by a premature attack on the formidably fortified heights of Buda. On the other hand, to commence the siege of Pesth, it would have been necessary to cross the Danube, and attack the city under the guns of the fortress. The whole of the Illyrian population had risen to join his standards. From Temesvar, Slavonia, and all the south-eastern comitats, these terrible volunteers were now marching, with the Greek patriarch of Carlowitz at their head, to reach the camp of the Ban. In order to effect a junction with the forces expected from the Austrian capital, Jellachich now moved westward, upon Raab and Commorn, from which he could command the Danube and the communications between Vienna and Buda.

At this juncture, Kossuth, for the first time, showed real diplomatic ability. He perceived that the combination of Austrian and Croats, once effected, would be overwhelming, and that the safety of Hungary depended on his power to prevent it. The Vienna Radicals formed only a tenth part of the constituent assembly which at that time represented the empire, minus Hungary, Croatia, Transylvania, and Lombardy. But they could count on the co-operation of the Academic Legion: a sort of civic guard, composed partly of students and partly of young revolutionists from all parts of the empire—Germans, Poles, Italians. Kossuth had the sagacity to see, at a glance, that the fate of Hungary must now be decided at Vienna, that he had not a moment to lose in endeavouring to impose a change of policy on the central government, and that his natural allies were the Viennese Radicals. He immediately entered into negotiations with them, and conducted those negotiations with uncommon skill, rapidity, and courage. The Poles were persuaded to identify Jellachich with their terror of Russian intrigues; the Italians, with their indignant recollection of the Croat regiments, who fought against the independence of Italy upon Italian soil; the Germans, with a reactionary despotism. At the same time the Vienna Radicals were promised the support of a pow-

erful army, which Kossuth was to despatch to their assistance as soon as they had raised the red flag in Vienna. The Academic Legion rose to arms at the call of the forty Radicals in the assembly. Vienna was again revolutionised. The weak Bach administration was dispersed, General Latour, the minister of war, who had promised assistance to the Ban, was hanged on a lamp-post. The troops abandoned the town, which remained completely in the hands of the mob; and the Emperor, once more a fugitive, escaped to Lintz, leaving behind him this proclamation:

Schoenbrun, 7th of October, 1848.

I have done all that a sovereign can do for the public good. I have renounced the absolute power bequeathed to me by my ancestors. Forced, in the month of May, to fly the home of my fathers, I returned to it with no other guarantee than my confidence in my people. A faction, strong in its audacity, has pushed matters to the last extremity. Pillage and murder reign at Vienna, and my minister of war has been assassinated. Trusting in God and my right, I again quit my capital in order to find elsewhere the means of succouring my oppressed subjects. Let all who love Austria and her liberties rally round their Emperor.

Chapter VIII

The position of Jellachich, deprived of the support from Vienna, on which he had been depending, and shut in between the Magyar army on the one side, and the Austrian revolution on the other, was now perilous. The destruction of his whole force was universally considered certain. Great, therefore, was the astonishment of Europe when it was reported, immediately after the Emperor's flight, that the Ban, at the head of a compact and well-organised force, was before the walls of Vienna. He soon succeeded in effecting a junction with the forces under Prince Windischgrätz. For, the powerful army promised by Kossuth to the Vienna Radicals existed only in his own imagination, or in theirs. In a few days Jellachich was master of the Austrian capital and master of the Austrian empire. He had only to stretch out his hand and receive from his Croats the crown they were ready and able to place upon his head. Had he then chosen to content himself, merely with the titular possession of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria, Carniola, Carinthia, and Southern Styria, he might doubtless have created on the Adriatic a new kingdom, resting, with sufficient strength, on the command of the seaports of Trieste, Zara, Fiume, Ragusa, the enthusiastic alliance of the circumjacent Servian, Bulgar, Bosniac, and Montenegrin populations, the adoration of his subjects, and his own military genius. He aimed, however, at something higher than all this, something higher and (judging by the rarity of it), more difficult. The faithful fulfilment of a promise. He had promised himself and his imperial master that he would save the ancient empire of Austria. He kept his word, and died a few years later.

We should wander too far from the subject of this memoir were we now to dwell upon the events which immediately followed the victory just recorded.

On the 30th of October, 1848, the Magyar army was defeated by Prince Windischgrätz, on the plains of Svěchal, not far from Dobling, where Count Széchenyi was still languishing in Dr. Gorgen's asylum.

On the 22nd of November, 1848, Prince Schwartzberg assumed the direction of affairs, and commenced that political career with which the government of Austria was so long identified.

On the 2nd of December of the same year the Emperor Ferdinand abdicated, and was succeeded by his young nephew the present Emperor Franz Josef.

On the 8th of January, 1849, Batthiany, who, since the fall of his cabinet, had retired from political affairs, and confiding in his innocence, remained at Pesth, when the Magyar government removed to Debrezin, was arrested by Prince Windischgrätz, and, on the 5th of October, he was tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be hanged. During the night he attempted suicide, and his neck was so fearfully lacerated by the dagger with which he had endeavored to destroy himself, that the next morning it was deemed expedient to shoot, instead of hang him.

On the 19th of April, 1849, Kossuth proclaimed the dethronement of the House of Hapsburg Lorraine.

On the 15th of that month (that is to say, four days previously) the young Emperor had invoked the intervention of the Russian Czar for the suppression of the Magyar revolution.

On the 11th of August (that is to say, four months later) the Hungarian general surrendered his sword to the Russian Prince Paskievitch.

On the 17th of that month Kossuth escaped into Turkey. In the month of February, 1850, he was joined, in Asia Minor, by his wife, Theresa, and shortly afterwards by his daughter and two sons: who left Hungary with the permission of the Austrian government. So ended the Hungarian tragedy of 1848.

We now return to Döbling.

Chapter IX

The deviations of the magnetic needle do not coincide more precisely with the periodic convulsions of the solar atmosphere than the fluctuating conditions of Count Széchenyi's health coincided with that of his country's fortunes.

Between the month of September, 1848, and the month of August, 1849, Hungary was the theatre of a great historical tragedy. During the whole of that period the character of Széchenyi's madness was fearfully violent. On the 11th of August, 1849, the Hungarian tragedy was acted out, when the sword of an exhausted nation was surrendered to its foreign conqueror. From that moment both Hungary and Széchenyi subsided into the sullen lethargy of a profound dejection. A countenance in which all expression seemed for ever extinguished—more greatly grievous from its great want of grief—the sullen squalid ruin of a noble nature—this was all that now remained of the Great Magyar. To a period of exasperation had succeeded a period of silence. To this period of silence again succeeded a period of loquacity, wretched, miserable loquacity!—the loquacity of an unreasoning and unreasonable remorse. This lasted for two years. Towards the end of the year 1850, a feeble ray of reason reappeared. Ennui is surely a most intelligible affliction; and (promising symptom of intelligence!) Dr. Gorgen's patient began to be bored. To amuse and distract him, his guardians had recourse to all sorts of childish games. Increasing evidence of intelligence!—amusements failed to amuse him. He even showed himself able to appreciate the excessive tediousness and stupidity of conversation with his fellow-creatures. But he had always been fond of chess; and chessmen are perhaps, the only men for whose conduct a wise man should ever make himself responsible. The count's reviving passion for chess soon became all-absorbing. But it was not easy to find him a partner incapable of being tired out by his assiduity. At last, however, this difficult desideratum was secured.

A poor Hungarian student, whose name was Asboth, was, at this time, finishing his studies at the University of Vienna. In the intervals of study, he gained a few florins by teaching languages, and in this way he earned, meagrely enough, the means of paying for his own education. Asboth was induced to pass all his evenings at Döbling, playing chess

with Dr. Gorgen's illustrious patient. The poor student was paid so much an hour for this chess-playing, which usually began at six in the afternoon, and often lasted till daybreak next morning. But one evening Asboth failed to appear at the usual hour. What was the matter? He had gone mad! Shortly afterwards he died. When the count heard of Asboth's death his grief was excessive, and he sobbed like a child. From bondage to the fantastic but terrible suffering of his own mysterious affliction, Széchenyi was released by the wholesome emotion of this simple sorrow. Gradually he recovered—not, indeed, the hopes, the aspirations, and the energies which he had lost for ever in the defeat of his country's independence, but the full command of his fine intellect.

First his wife and children, then a host of friends, were admitted to see him. Their visits comforted his solitude, and their converse revived his interest in public affairs. One day the count's valet informed him that a soldier, who had come to see him, was anxious to be admitted.

"A soldier! What is his name?"

"Joseph, he says."

"I remember no soldier of that name. Yet it may be some old servant whom I should be ashamed to have forgotten. Admit him."

The door opened, and next moment the young Archduke Joseph flung himself into the arms of the count.

"Ah, how good, how kind of your Imperial Highness."

"Bah! my dear count; for Heaven's sake don't Imperial Highness, but tutoyez me, as you did in the good old time when you used to dance me (troublesome brat that I was!) upon your knees."

The poor count clung tenaciously to the asylum he had found at Dobbling, nor could the frequent entreaties of his family ever induce him to quit it. Yet from its window, as it were, his intellect, supreme in its superiority to those on whose conduct he was henceforth to look down, an inactive but keenly critical spectator, surveyed the world outside, with a political coup d'oeil rarely equalled in accuracy of vision.

Chapter X

The political deluge of 1848 had subsided, but the old landmarks did not reappear. On the surface nothing was visible save wreckage. Never before or since, in the history of the Austro-Hungarian empire, has there been a period so propitious to the task of political reconstruction in a conservative spirit as that which immediately succeeded the revolution of 1848. But this precious moment was lost in the absence of any political intelligence capable of understanding and utilising it. All political parties were then exhausted, all political quacks discredited; society had learned by a bitter experience to mistrust its own strength. It was willing to be doctored and nursed and put on the strictest regimen: But, above all things else, it needed and longed for repose. It had the misfortune, however, to have for its doctors only Prince Schwartzberg and Baron Bach. These politicians (statesmen we cannot call them) could think of no more judicious treatment for their patient than to put the poor wretch, first of all, through a severe course of courts-martial, then tie it up hand and foot in the tightest ligatures of red tape, gag it, tweak its nose, and spit in its face. This was called a conservative policy.

Baron Bach was, or rather is (for, though politically dead, he is yet, physically, alive) a man of rare intellectual activity. But his intellect is like that of Philip the Second of Spain: the intellect of a born bureaucrat, which looks at all that is great through a diminishing glass, and all that is small through a magnifying glass. Prince Schwartzberg, though not a wise minister, was not an ordinary man. His self-esteem and self-confidence were enormous. He was a grand seigneur by temperament as well as social position: the head of a semi-royal house with more than imperial pride in all that he was, and all that he represented. Brilliant in conversation, energetic in action always effective in official correspondence, he was vain, haughty, self-asserting, over-bearing, but gifted with a singular power to charm and subdue, when he pleased, both men and women. He was a passionate and unscrupulous man of pleasure, whose love of pleasure was, however, united with an immense ambition, and a remarkable facility for public affairs. He brooked no rival either in affairs of state, or in affairs of gallantry, and never scrupled to use his political power to crush the objects of his private dislike. He had an unmitigated contempt for every variety of the human species which did not find its culminating representative perfection in himself. And as the only portion of the human species which Providence had reserved for this honour was the purely German aristocracy of Austria, the very existence of all the other nationalities of the empire was, under his régime, superciliously ignored. The most eminent and wealthiest Hungarian magnates—men whose properties are amongst the largest in Europe, and who had been taught by Széchenyi and his disciples to study with affectionate assiduity every inch of their native soil—now found themselves subjected, in the minutest details of local administration to the clumsy insolence of under-bred and ill-educated official clerks, sent from Vienna to rule over populations of whose language they were ignorant, in provinces of which the geography even was but imperfectly known to them. The little finger of Schwartzberg was heavier than the whole body of Metternich; and national susceptibilities which had been tenderly managed by the great prince, were insulted without provocation by his successor. To the man who now governed the empire it was intolerable to admit that the empire was under obligations to any one but himself. Those who had defended, and those who had attacked it, were treated alike, and the Croats were crushed as flat as the Hungarians under the hoofs of that high horse which Prince Schwartzberg rode rough-shod over all.

Of the social condition of Hungary at this time, the following picture is painted by M. Aurelius Keskemethy, a young Hungarian, who, after having shared with enthusiasm all the ultra-revolutionary aspirations of the Hungarian youth in 1848, had been so completely sobered by the result of them, that in 1857 he was willing to earn his livelihood as an employe of the Austrian bureaucracy, whose worthy function was (to use his own words) that of "deciding how much intellectual nourishment might, without inconvenience, be allowed to the thirty-six millions of souls which constitute the Austrian empire"—in other words, the censorship of the press.

"In 1857," says M. Keskemethy, "the system of M. de Bach had attained its apogee. 'Give us only ten years more,' said the government, 'and all the elder generation which still clings, in secret to the constitutional traditions of 1848, will have died out.' No great trouble was expected in dealing with the younger generation. Some of us were driven, by sheer want of any other means of earning our bread, to seek employment of the government which had reduced us to this necessity. One went into the army, another into a public office. No other career was open to them. The small nobility was half ruined. The great nobility was corrupted. The youth of our national aristocracy carefully excluded from public life, gave itself up to dissipation and frivolity. If a few old men still pleaded in private for the preservation of some of the ancient secular liberties of the realm, their voice could never reach the

public ear, for the press was completely silenced, and nothing but the lowest and most venal journalism allowed; whilst all that passed behind the scenes was carefully concealed from every eye by a vigilant police."

Such was the social and political condition of the Austrian empire when the intelligence of Széchenyi was re-awakened to the contemplation of it.

Who can wonder that he deemed the window of a lunatic asylum the most fitting point of view from which to scrutinise the effects of a policy extolled by the wisacres outside as the perfection of political wisdom?

Chapter XI

News, accurate and ample, of the outside world was not wanting to the recluse of Dobling. Books, pamphlets, letters, visitors, he received daily. His correspondence was active and extensive, nor was it altogether private. The fusion brought about by government influence between the Hungarian Oestbahn and the German Sudbahn Railway Companies appeared to Széchenyi the virtual suppression of an enterprise demanded by Hungarian interests, and the simultaneous confiscation of Hungarian resources for the exclusive furtherance of a purely Germanic undertaking. In the strength of this conviction he addressed to Count Edmond Ziehi, one of the most eminent and capable of the Hungarian directors, a letter which found its way into the public journals, and was immediately suppressed by the Austrian police, but not before it had created a considerable sensation. From this letter we extract a few remarkable passages :

"Thou wast ever," says the writer to the recipient of it, "punctilious on the point of honour, more than punctilious, keenly sensitive. No man doubts it, and I, myself have been so fortunate as to test the justice of thy reputation in this respect. Dost thou yet remember, friend, that evening at Pesth, when we walked home together from the Casino, and when, taking offence at a remark which I let fall most innocently in the course of our conversation, thou didst challenge me there and then? Faith, had I not already proved myself no novice in the use of sword and pistol, it would have been impossible for me to have refused the encounter. But luckily I could, without risking the imputation of personal cowardice, make to thee my cordial excuses, and as soon as we had shaken hands thereupon, I conceived for thee a sincere affection— an affection strengthened by my hearty appreciation of thy sensitive self-respect. Yet was there one thing which ever vexed me beyond measure, and that was, to see thee—let me say it frankly—as a man of pleasure so ardent, as a patriot so languid. Answer, friend, was not my judgment of thee just? Ah, well, thirty years have passed away since then. And now? . . . I am a wreek, the semi-animate remnant of a ruined life, whilst thou, on the contrary, has grown and greatedened, from year to year, in the domain of a manly and creative activity. And with what joy (if, indeed, the word 'joy' may be uttered without rebuke by any man situated as I am), with what inexpressible joy, dear friend, have I learned that thou hast the gift and the will to be happy, not merely with that miserable simulacrum of happiness which is from without, but that genuine happiness which is from within, and hath its source in the conscience of an honest man. What greater happiness, indeed, can any man hope to find in this world than the happiness of serving his country, and manfully assisting the mighty march of man's progress towards man's destined good? Yes, it is indeed with joy that I have learned how, unshuddered by the heavy yoke of afflictive circumstances, thou art even now, in the unrelinquished activity of a brave man's life, happier, far happier, than in the days of thy heedless youth. Happier—and why? Because enjoyment was then, and productive activity is now, the aim of thy existence."

Could St. Paul himself more artfully, or with more touching dignity of appeal, have enlisted on behalf of the cause he pleaded the self-esteem of those to whom he addressed himself?

"He," the letter adds, "who knows how to suffer and endure without flinching on behalf of what he owes his country, he only merits the patriot's thorny crown. The man who holds his ground against all odds (and in despite of insult, calumny, misconception, and menace), that man remains master of circumstances and lord of the occasion, which, however long delayed, never fails the expectation of those who wait for it. But the man who quits the ground of public duty has committed political suicide; and not even the Voice which raised Lazarus from the tomb can restore life to the dead who die thus."

In 1858, Baron Bach, the Austrian Minister of the Interior, demanded the suppression of the fundamental statute in the constitution of the Hungarian Academy founded by Széchenyi in 1852; which statute declares that the permanent object of that institution is the culture of the Magyar language. This called forth a published manifesto from Széchenyi.

"Tortured," he says, "by indescribable mental suffering, a man buried alive, and whose heart cannot beat without bleeding, fully conscious of all the horrors of my present desolate position, I now ask myself, 'What is my duty to the Hungarian Academy?'"

After pathetically justifying the protest which it so fearlessly records, the letter then continues, in words which, written in 1858, were positively prophetic: "My conviction is that our glorious Emperor, Franz Josef, will sooner or later discover that the aim of his majesty's present ministers, viz., the forcible Germanisation of all the constituent races of the empire, is simply a solemn absurdity, a cruel mystification in which Austria is cheating herself. He will end by perceiving that the majority of the Austrian populations are gravitating towards foreign centres, and that this movement, so perilous for the empire, must necessarily be accelerated by every difficulty to which its external relations are exposed. The disasters which those difficulties must occasion are inevitable. In the midst of this general tendency towards the dissolution of the empire, what is the position of its Hungarian subjects? The Hungarian, and he only, has no affinity whatsoever with any foreign race or state. His ambition and interests cannot range beyond his present country; and it is only under the sheltering aegis of his legitimate and constitutional sovereign that his utmost desires and traditional destinies can by any possibility be realised. When the day of difficulty and danger arrives, and yet once more I affirm that most assuredly that day *will* arrive, the emperor, enlightened by the disastrous result of mischievous political experiments, will then, perforce become himself the champion of those whose national existence his majesty's government now endeavours to extinguish. Our young monarch will then no longer tolerate the assassination of that noble nation with whose loyal co-operation a chivalrous sovereign may safely dare all difficulties, and brave the most desperate circumstances: that recuperative and devoted race, which on behalf of a prince beloved, and faithful to his knightly oath, hath ever been, is now, and ever will be, ready to shed the last drop of its blood. . . .

"This is what I perceive in the future. And let me add that, with all the strength of my being, I confide implicitly in that Providence which often smites severely both princes and peoples in punishment of their faults, but which has never yet suffered a generous nation to perish utterly or an honest prince to remain for ever intellectually blinded. Sustained by this conviction, which comes to me from my faith in God, my decision as founder of the academy has been firmly taken. If there be no means of resistance, if we must absolutely submit to the conditions imposed upon us, I accept the new statutes, although there is not one of them which I approve. I accept them all with the resignation of a conquered man, whose

• See chapter I. of this Memoir.

heart may be wrong but whose opinion cannot be fettered. At the same time, however, true to the noble motto of 'justum ac tenacem propositi virum,' I hereby solemnly declare that I shall cease to pay to the academy the annual interest of the sum dedicated by me to the foundation of it, the moment in which the sacrifice of my fortune becomes liable to employment on behalf of any other than the great object of its founders, which has been recognised by the law of the land, and confirmed by contract between the nation and its sovereign. When I am dead my heirs will, I doubt not, accept and adhere to this declaration. And if a day should come, when my present fears are realised, on that day either I or my successor will most assuredly withdraw all our contributions from the funds of an academy which will then have ceased to fulfill the purpose of its foundation, and devote those funds to the creation of some other and worthier national institution."

It was not to be expected that these periodical protests and criticisms, even though issued from beneath the sinister shelter of a lunatic asylum, would long be tolerated by an administration, which, to adopt the metaphor of a Polish poet, was capable of punishing all who ventured to pick up a pin in the street, because it knew that, in the hands of the oppressed, a pin may become a formidable weapon. Széchenyi was at the same time writing to the London Times newspaper, vigorous descriptions of the political condition of Austria under the administration of Baron Bach. Whenever one of these letters appeared in the great English journal, it was a day of rejoicing at Dobling.

In 1859, the Bach system began to totter. The predictions of Széchenyi were already being fulfilled. Not only the Hungarians, but all the other non-German population of the empire, had been taught to execrate the government under which they were living. The Czechs and Croats complained that what had been inflicted on the Magyars by way of punishment was dealt out to them by way of reward; and the declaration of war between Austria and Italy was hailed by all these populations with a thrill of hope in hearts which invoked from all parts of the empire the defeat of the imperial armies. The young Emperor himself, whose political misfortunes have been partly due to the generous loyalty with which he has at all times given fair play to the policy of incapable ministers, was at last growing thoroughly disgusted with the proved sterility and weakness of the repressive system which had for ten years been carried out in his name. To regain the failing confidence of the sovereign, to reassure his majesty's increasing alarm, and to justify the policy of the government, Baron Bach caused to be drawn up a private memoir by one of his employés, which he himself carefully corrected, and which, under the title of *Rückblick* (Retrospect) was an elaborate apology for the Bach policy; which it affirmed to have been specially beneficial to all the material interests of Hungary. This memoir not being intended for publication, but only for the eye of the sovereign, was written with a reckless audacity of assertion.

Soon, a small pamphlet, written in German, was printed and published in London; and speedily circulated at Vienna. The complicated and clumsy title of it was, "Ein Blick auf den anonymen Rückblick, welcher für einen vertrauten Kreis, in verhältnissmässig wenigen Exemplaren in Monate October, 1857, im Wien erschien. Von einem Ungar. London 1859." Anglice: "A glance at the Retrospect, of which in October, 1859, a few copies were printed for private and confidential circulation at Vienna. By a Hungarian." This publication was a crushing reply to the Bach Memoir, which it mercilessly thrust into publicity after having stripped it bare of every rag of argument, and branded the word "*Lie*" upon its forehead. The author of this pamphlet was Stephen Széchenyi.

On the 21st of August, 1859, Baron Bach's resignation was accepted by the Emperor. Baron Hubner, who had till then been Austrian ambassador at Paris, assumed the portfolio for home affairs, in place of Baron Bach, in the Rechberg-Schmerling cabinet. To these statesmen the pacification of Hungary now appeared to be a matter of urgent necessity, nor

did they scruple to enter into correspondence on the subject of it with the recluse of Dobling. At last a happier day seemed about to dawn, both for Hungary and for the Great Magyar.

Chapter XII

In vain! That gleam of hope was momentary only, and soon "the jaws of darkness did devour it up." Baron Hubner's proposals were considered too hazardous, by his colleagues, who were also dissatisfied with the loyalty of his proceedings. He retired from office suddenly, without having achieved any solution of the Hungarian question. There still remained in the cabinet a considerable lump of the old leaven. The disappointment was a terrible one to the excitable temperament of Széchenyi. Among those disciples of Baron Esch who remained in the ministry, was one whose theory of the executive function was known to be even more hostile to personal liberty than that of his master. This was Baron Thiery, minister of police.

The following anecdote has been related to us by an intimate friend of Széchenyi's:

In the year 1833 a duel was fought between Count Stephen Széchenyi and Baron Louis Oreczy, in consequence of some offence taken by one or other of them at expressions used in the course of a violent political discussion. On their way to the place of meeting, the two principals recounted, each to his own seconds, the dreams which they had respectively dreamed over night. Each had dreamed that he was killed by a pistol bullet in the head, but neither had seen in his dream the hand by which the shot was fired. In the duel Baron Oreczy was slightly wounded. The two combatants survived the encounter. But many years afterwards Louis Oreczy blew out his brains. The fate of Stephen Széchenyi is now to be told.

At half past six o'clock on the morning of the 3rd of March, 1860, a police officer M. Felsenthal, accompanied by two commissaries, entered the apartment of Count Széchenyi at Dobling, and proceeded to search the premises.

The count received these unexpected visitors with the contemptuous courtesy of a great nobleman towards ill-mannered inferiors. He assisted their investigations, offered them cigars and refreshments, and overwhelmed them with ironical compliments. The police officers withdrew without having discovered any papers of the least political importance, but not without having possessed themselves of a little casket containing the count's private correspondence with his family. After their departure, he was informed that during this search the house had been surrounded by a strong military cordon, and that simultaneously his two sons, Bela and Odo, and his most intimate friends, Gaza Ziehi, Maximilien Falk, Ernest Hollan, and Aurelius Keeskemethy, had been subjected to a similar domiciliary visit, accompanied by a similar display of military force.

This proceeding on the part of the minister of police created great scandal and alarm at Vienna. To justify it, Baron Thiery publicly declared that the police were on the traces of a vast conspiracy, the soul of which was Count Stephen Széchenyi.

The count wrote to the minister, demanding the restitution of his private letters, and a personal interview for the purpose of disproving the calumny by which their robbery was said to have been justified. Both demands were rejected in the most insulting terms, and the count was significantly informed that he could no longer be allowed to shelter himself beneath the roof of a lunatic asylum, and must be prepared to quit it at an early date. And meanwhile Baron Nicholas Vay was proscribed and pursued, Zsedenyi and Richter were thrown into prison, General Eynatten hanged himself in his prison cell. Every Hungarian, still true to the cause of his country was being hunted down by Baron Thiery's hounds.

On the 8th of April, 1860, two servants of Count Stephen Széchenyi knocked at the count's bedroom door: it being their business to call him, as usual, at seven. Receiving no answer, and finding the door locked, they hastened to inform one of the doctors of the establishment. On opening the door of the count's apartment, the doctor and those with him recoiled in horror.

Count Stephen Széchenyi was seated in his arm chair, over one side of which his left arm was hanging. In his right hand was a revolver; his head was shattered almost to pieces. He must have placed the muzzle of one barrel of the revolver so close against the eyeball of the left eye, when he fired, that the discharge could have made but little, if any, noise.

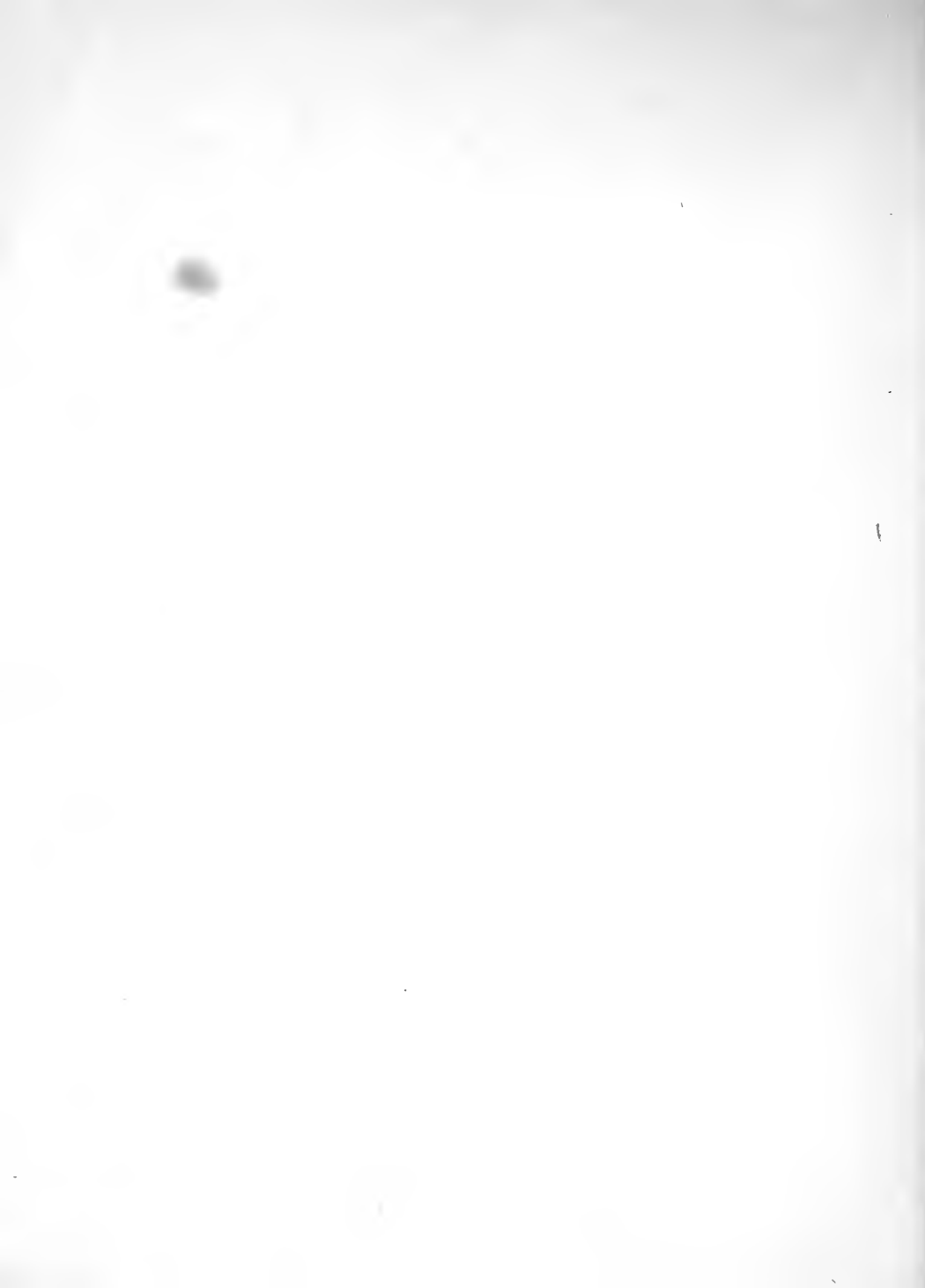
A sick man who slept in the story under the count's apartment, thought he had noticed a slight sound during the night in the room above: but by no one else had any explosion been heard.

At the hour of ten in the morning of the 10th of April, a small group of about a hundred persons was gathered round a plain black catafalque in the chapel of the Dobling hospital. The same day, the body of the Great Magyar was removed from Dobling to the family vaults of the count's ancestral mansion at Zenkendorf. The funeral cortège reached Zenkendorf in the evening, where the illustrious dead was received with lighted torches by the inhabitants of all the surrounding towns and villages. The bier was accompanied by upwards of six thousand persons to the chapel of Zenkendorf. On the following day, the remains of Stephen Széchenyi were placed, by eight young counts of the Széchenyi family, upon the funeral car, with the kalpalk and violet-coloured attela of the deceased. On either side of it, walked four hundred of the principal inhabitants of the district, bearing torches; after them, an immense concourse of humbler mourners—the youth and age of all the surrounding country far and wide.

Just as the body was being lowered into the grave, that immense multitude burst, as though simultaneously inspired into patriotic song; and while the ashes of the great Hungarian sank beneath his native earth, there rose above them, on many thousand voices, the great national hymn of the Hungarian people.

So, in the holy precincts of the antique church which he himself had rescued from ruin and dedicated to the memory of St. Stephen, now rest all that was mortal of St. Stephen's noblest son.

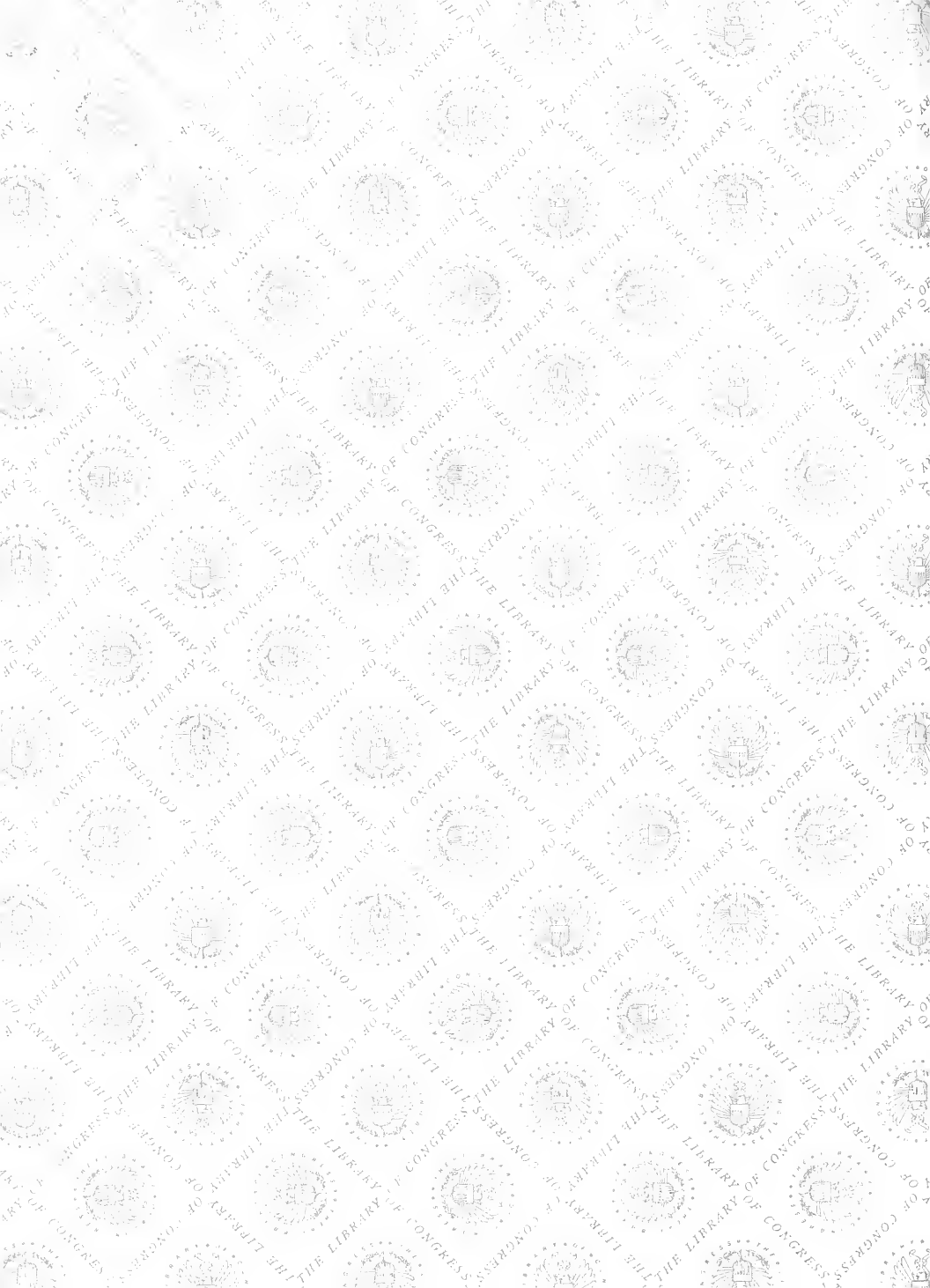
A few weeks later, on the 30th of April, 1860, a more splendid and general tribute of respect and gratitude was rendered to the memory of the Great Magyar. On that day the National Academy of Hungary celebrated at Pesth in solemn state the requiem of its great founder; and there was not a single province or parish of Hungary which (to the impotent vexation of the then Austrian government) was not publicly represented at this ceremony.





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